

Contacts:

Michael Marchand, Governor's Communications Office, 360-902-4136;

Tammy Owings, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, 360-902-2637

Gov. Locke Announces \$21.8 Million in Salmon Recovery Grants

OLYMPIA – May 8, 2003 – Gov. Gary Locke today announced the approval of nearly \$22 million in program grants designed to improve and protect salmon habitat in Washington state. The funding, which was approved by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) earlier this month, will target 70 habitat restoration and improvement grants across the state.

In its fourth annual review, which commenced in mid-2002, the board funded 70 of the 207 requests it received. The funded projects are located across the state, in 23 different watershed or regional areas.

“I commend the board for its diligence in the selection process and funding of the most qualified projects across the state,” Locke said. “Through its work with local watershed and regional groups, the state can continue its commitment to salmon recovery efforts.”

Combined with local matching funds, the total value of the approved project list is more than \$32.7 million. An additional \$3 million in projects are identified for possible future approval pending determination of fund availability and other issues.

“In these difficult budgetary times it is terribly important that we are spending the SRFB money wisely and getting a return for the money that's being invested,” said William Ruckelshaus, chair of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. “The board will do its best to honor our commitment to the local watershed groups and at the same time protect salmon by funding the best salmon projects possible.”

The SRFB used state and local technical groups to help review all proposals. Local technical advisory groups apply their scientific understanding of the watershed to evaluate projects. Then local citizen committees review the technical groups' recommendations to develop a final list of ranked projects to receive funding.

Once the funding board receives project lists from the designated local lead entities, a statewide panel of scientists review and rate the local process and list of projects based on the benefit to salmon and the certainty of project success. Through this level of scrutiny, the SRFB can fund projects that are both scientifically sound and locally supported.

The board will begin working on guidance for the fifth grant round at its June 4 and 5 meeting in Vancouver, Wash.

A summary and detailed listing of the funded projects are available on the Salmon Recovery Funding Board Web site at <http://www.iac.wa.gov/srfb/grants/funding.htm>.

###